

NGHIÊN CỨU NHẬN THỨC CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN VỀ TÁC DỤNG CỦA SỬ DỤNG TÀI LIỆU NGUYÊN GỐC TRONG GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG ANH CHUYÊN NGÀNH TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở VIỆT NAM

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Trong nền giáo dục hiện nay, với những ưu điểm không thể phủ nhận của tài liệu nguyên gốc, việc tích hợp nguồn tài liệu này trong giảng dạy ngôn ngữ dường như ngày càng thu hút sự quan tâm của các học giả và các nhà ngôn ngữ. Tuy nhiên, để có cái nhìn tổng thể về tác động của tài liệu nguyên gốc trong môi trường giảng dạy ngôn ngữ nói chung và giảng dạy tiếng Anh ở bậc đại học nói riêng, việc đánh giá quá trình sử dụng thực tế loại tài liệu này vô cùng quan trọng. Do vậy, nghiên cứu này được tiến hành để tìm hiểu nhận thức của giảng viên một cơ sở giáo dục đại học về tác dụng của sử dụng tài liệu nguyên gốc trong giảng dạy tiếng Anh chuyên ngành - chương trình đòi hỏi nhiều kiến thức và kỹ năng từ môi trường thực tế. Để giải bài toán này, nghiên cứu sử dụng đồng thời cả phương pháp định lượng và định tính thông qua mời 09 giảng viên dạy tiếng Anh chuyên ngành của cơ sở giáo dục tham gia trả lời bảng hỏi và phỏng vấn. Kết quả nghiên cứu phản ánh phần lớn giảng viên có thái độ tích cực với tài liệu nguyên gốc và mong muốn kết hợp tài liệu này trong chương trình giảng dạy tiếng Anh chuyên ngành mặc dù họ gặp không ít khó khăn trong việc tiếp cận với các nguồn tài liệu không công khai cũng như áp lực về thời gian khi sử dụng thực tế. Đây cũng là cơ sở đáng tin cậy để các giảng viên có thể cân nhắc việc sử dụng nhiều hơn tài liệu nguyên gốc trong chương trình tiếng Anh chuyên ngành trong thời gian tới.

Từ khóa: nhận thức, tài liệu nguyên gốc, tiếng Anh chuyên ngành.

The integration of authentic materials into language teaching seems to attract an increasing interest from scholars and linguists thanks to their undeniable merits. However, a review and evaluation of the practical use of these sources is of great significance so as to gain an in-depth overview of their influences on language pedagogy in general and English language teaching at the tertiary level. Accordingly, this study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of instructors at a higher education institution on the effectiveness of authentic materials in teaching English for specific purposes (ESP), which requires various practical knowledge and skills. To this end, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Nine ESP lecturers of the Foreign Languages Department were invited to give responses to questionnaires and interviews. The findings reveal that most instructors had a positive attitude towards authentic materials and desired to integrate them into the ESP curriculum despite their limited access to some undisclosed sources as well as time pressure in employing these materials. This study also provides a basis for instructors to consider using more authentic materials in teaching ESP in the near future.

Keywords: perception, authentic materials, English for specific purposes.

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN ESP TEACHING AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE IN VIETNAM

Introduction

Over the past years, linguists have tried to find out what kind of teaching materials may support the process of language learning and teaching as well as students' language competence outside the classroom. To this end, much comparison and evaluation in different research is conducted to look for plus points and minus points of both authentic and traditional materials like textbooks.

At the People's Security Academy (PSA), where this study was conducted, students have opportunities to experience ESP program for 30 years. Meanwhile, English for Law Enforcement is the only official textbook for this program. To meet the practical requirements of a communicative environment, ESP teachers try to integrate various authentic sources into the curricula, although they have to face the conspicuous lack of these materials relating to public security. Moreover, though extensive research on using authentic materials in ESP teaching has been conducted, no single study has been implemented at the people's public security universities in Vietnam in general and the PSA in particular. Due to the gaps in previous research and the status quo at the PSA, it is inevitable to embark on a study on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of using authentic materials in ESP teaching at the Academy.

Research questions

Within the scope of this study, this research was conducted to fulfil the purpose of clarifying ESP teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of using authentic materials and challenges in using these sources at the PSA with a research question as follows:

How do teachers perceive the effectiveness of using authentic materials in ESP teaching at the PSA?

Literature Review

Authentic materials

Authentic materials can be defined in various ways. The most popular definition may be found that authentic material is anything relating to the real language and communication in real events. This idea is supported by Maroko (2010), who regards authentic materials as: "real language, produced by real speakers or writers for real audiences and designed to convey real messages of some sort" (p. 5). Other linguists emphasize the characteristic "non-pedagogical purposes" of authentic sources.

Advantages and disadvantages of authentic materials

Highly valuing both linguistic and non-linguistic advantages of authentic materials, more scholars believe that these

sources contribute to a setting platform for learning the target language. As Richard (2004) discussed, access to authentic materials enables learners to be involved in the real circumstances and familiar with English naturally. Likewise, in Tamo (2009)'s study, he reveals that authentic sources prepare learners to encounter interaction outside the classroom. Furthermore, he maintains that the original contents of authentic materials could motivate students in language learning. This argument is similar to the viewpoint of Erkaya (2005) who believes that using authentic sources for studying a target language is truly motivating learners. The use of authentic materials can partly solve the deficiency in exposing to the target language because they can shorten differences between what learners study and what learners experience outside the classroom.

Despite the striking advantages of authentic materials, teachers face some undeniable challenges. As Gilmore (2007) claimed, complicated structures and reduced vocabularies result in frustration and reduction of interest of learners. The same opinion is also uttered by Khaniya (2010), who implies that introducing authentic materials to lower-level students might not be appropriate. Another minus that should be considered is time consumption. Guariento and Morley (2001) explain that it is difficult for teachers to balance their learner's needs, competence and appropriateness of the

curriculum. Accordingly, they spend too much time selecting, evaluating and adapting such materials in the teaching process.

The role of authentic materials in ESP teaching

An emergent characteristic of ESP program is to simultaneously improve authentic interactions (classroom and learner authenticity) and bring authentic sources into the curriculum. In this regard, Pinner (2014b) explains that classroom authenticity is formed in a language acquisition environment and by setting purposeful situations for subjects to argue and join in motivated activities. He also describes learner authenticity as the reciprocal interplay between learners and the context of language. In Baghban and Ambigapathy (2011)'s research concerning the interrelationship between authentic sources and ESP, there is every certainty that authentic materials are advisable to be used in ESP courses. They elaborate that ESP is regarded as a student-centric approach that focuses on learners' needs and purposes of English learning. Similarly, Lesiak-Bielawska (2015) affirms that it is essential for ESP materials to be relevant to students' target contexts and authentic. It can be explained that materials of ESP program that contain typical examples of rhetorical forms and structures of target genres improve students' perception of how texts are formed and the communicative target is obtained.

Perception

According to Hwang, Wang, & Pomplun's study (2011), when a person perceives objects in the visual world, it is certain that he or she is affected by elements like shape, colour, their meaning and semantic relations. McDonald (2012) analyses that perception includes the stage of noticing the environment's elements and explaining on the basis of the experience and the extent of comprehension (p. 205). This can be described as how humans can use their senses to convey the thought or feeling of a worldview. More specifically, it is a series of cognitive stages in which a person identifies, acknowledges and explains objects or situations with concrete meaning.

Methodology

Research design

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods with data collecting instruments being questionnaire and interview. According to Creswell et al. (2017), this design can be applied if the researcher desires to combine and compare the results recorded through both quantitative and qualitative strategy in order to gain more comprehensive understanding. In addition, the simultaneous employment will verify the reliability of outcomes and review whether the participants respond in the same way or not with the same issues, whatever quantitative or qualitative - designed questions is.

Research setting

Participants

The researcher invited nine English lecturers of the Department of Foreign Languages at the PSA. They all have experience in teaching ESP courses for over three years. In this study, non-probability sampling strategy was employed because it is recommended to apply this strategy for small-scale studies whose findings do not require generalization.

Data collection instrument

To find the answer for the research, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. Specifically, the researcher adapted Al-Musallam (2009)'s questionnaire in which some unsuited items were excluded or changed to maximize the reliability of data. The questionnaires contain thirty-three items, namely a part of collecting participants' demographic information and Likert scale items of teachers' perceptions. The interview was adapted from Silvani (2018)'s study and contained seven questions. Moreover, a semi-structured interview was applied to create more opportunities for the researcher to clarify unpredictably arising issues from responses.

Data collection procedures

After receiving the approval of functional divisions of the PSA, an invitation that contained specific

information about the questionnaire, interview and ethical issues was sent to all participants. Three lecturers who have been teaching ESP classes for two years took a pilot check of questionnaires to avoid the emergence of possible flaws. Both questionnaires and interviews were implemented at the same time. Tape record and note-taking were used for each interview. In addition, before embarking on the stage of analysing data, the researcher used member checks in which two participants checked transcription.

Data analysis

In this study, the data was analysed individually based on each instrument collecting them. In terms of data that were recorded from the questionnaires, they were calculated via Microsoft Excel. In the first phase, the editing process was paid much attention to find problems in respondents' answers. Secondly, the researcher coded variables in a group and imported the database. Finally, the descriptive statistics was processed, compared, contrasted and demonstrated in the tables and figures containing percentages and frequencies. Accordingly, the researcher found remarkable outcomes.

Concerning data from the interviews, thematic analysis was applied in this research. Firstly, the recording file was transcribed verbatim. The next phase related to the coding scheme. Different

series of data conveying the same information were connected to the same code. Thirdly, it is essential to specify recurring patterns, followed by comparing and contrasting the formerly grouped categories. As a result, the investigator could condense such categories into themes. Finally, stressing striking themes was implemented to resolve the research problems.

Findings

Findings of questionnaire

Table 1 sheds light on the teachers' views on the ESP classes at the PSA. The single most striking observation to emerge from the data comparison was that no disagreement selection was found. Particularly, 4.67 was the highest mean in which all participants agreed with the advantage of ESP course in supporting learners' ability to read and comprehend different materials in the professional environment.

In addition, items 8 and 10 had the percentage of assessment in common. Specifically, in such items, there were eight participants who agreed that ESP courses helped students be acquainted with the language in daily life and made them more confident to communicate. As for item 9, two third of those who responded indicated the effectiveness of ESP program in increasing students' motivation in classroom activities.

<i>The current ESP classes at the PSA</i>	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean (M)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
7. Help learners read and comprehend different materials in professional context	6	66.67	3	33.33	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.67
8. Introduce learners to the way of using language in the real world	2	22.22	6	66.67	1	11.11	0	0	0	0	4.11
9. Boost learners to join in classroom activities	1	11.11	5	55.56	3	33.33	0	0	0	0	3.78
10. Make learners more confident in communication	2	22.22	6	66.67	1	11.11	0	0	0	0	4.11

Table 1: Summarizing the results of teachers' perceptions on the current ESP classes

In Table 2, twenty-three items described the ESP lecturers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of employing authentic sources. Over half of the statements were over the sub-grand mean (3.37), illustrating positive responses. Two third participants agreed that using authentic materials in ESP instruction was crucial. Almost 80% of lecturers affirmed that such materials would probably satisfy learners' demands for their work after graduation. Eight out of nine surveyed emphasized that it was interesting to integrate authentic input into language teaching.

The highest mean (4.44) was recorded in items 11 and 17. Strikingly, 100% of those surveyed agreed that authentic input boosted the practical knowledge of vocabulary for students. On the contrary, item 21 received the lowest mean score (2.0). There were still two participants hesitating to decide whether such non-

purposeful teaching materials caused frustration for students or not. Additionally, what can be clearly seen as the high rate of agreement in item 23 that valued the possibility of motivating learners to do more reading outside the classroom thanks to authentic materials. Nevertheless, only a minority of the questioned (22.22%) agreed that they enabled learners to be more familiar with grammatical issues in their original situations.

Regarding obstacles to the process of selecting suitable authentic materials, a large number of the surveyed showed concurrence with this stage in each lesson of the ESP program. Another difficulty was found when over 50% implied that accessing these sources was strenuous. Furthermore, many teachers found it challenging to design the applicable tasks when using authentic input (nearly 67%), only two participants denied the trouble.

As for item 29, over 50% of those who answered opined that they had to spend much time on using authentic materials in practice.

Regarding disadvantages with which learners may be burdened, approximately 78% of respondents asserted that their students had no trouble in comprehending authentic materials. A similar percentage of disagreement is also recorded in item 20, in which authentic resources would cause cultural conflicts that prevent comprehension. In contrast, they insisted that this type of material boosted cultural understanding (roughly 67%) and weathered cultural obstacles to studying a language (short of 78%).

Concerning items 13 to 15, in correlation with textbooks, a small number of teachers (22.23%) agreed that authentic materials facilitated students' language proficiency and 33.33% of those

perceived that students' listening and reading comprehension in the real world would be improved. However, as for the writing, well over half of those surveyed appreciated the effectiveness of such materials in boosting writing style in work context compared with traditional books. In the same vein, items 32 and 33 shared the same high percentage of agreement (55.56%), reflecting that ESP teachers introduced many dialects and incorporated subjects relating to students' social and working life via authentic materials more effectively than they could via textbooks.

More interestingly, four out of nine people wavered to confirm more preference for authentic sources over textbooks. The questioned would rather to use authentic input as a supplementary source in their ESP course (approximately 78%).

<i>The use of authentic materials will</i>	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean (M)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
11. Introduce learners to how language is used	5	55.56	3	33.33	1	11.11	0	0	0	0	4.44
12. Meet learners' requirements in future jobs	2	22.22	5	55.56	2	22.22	0	0	0	0	4.0
13. Improve learners' language proficiency more than textbooks do	0	0	2	22.23	3	33.33	3	33.33	1	11.11	2.67
14. Improve learners' listening and reading comprehension in context more than textbooks do	0	0	3	33.33	1	11.11	4	44.45	1	11.11	2.67

15. Increase learners' writing styles in work context more than textbooks do	0	0	5	55.56	2	22.22	1	11.11	1	11.11	3.22
16. Increase learners' familiarity with using grammar rules in their original situation	1	11.11	1	11.11	4	44.45	2	22.22	1	11.11	2.89
17. Develop learners' knowledge of vocabulary items in real situations	4	44.44	5	55.56	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.44
18. Improve learners' cultural understanding	2	22.22	4	44.44	3	33.34	0	0	0	0	3.89
19. Be difficult for learners to comprehend	0	0	1	11.11	1	11.11	6	66.67	1	11.11	2.22
20. Cause cultural conflicts which prevent comprehension	0	0	0	0	2	22.22	6	66.67	1	11.11	2.11
21. Make learners feel frustrated	0	0	0	0	2	22.22	5	55.56	2	22.22	2.0
22. Be interesting	1	11.11	7	77.78	1	11.11	0	0	0	0	4.0
23. Boost learners to do more reading outside the class	0	0	6	66.67	3	33.33	0	0	0	0	3.67
24. Help learners address some cultural barriers to language learning	0	0	7	77.78	1	11.11	1	11.11	0	0	3.67
25. It is essential to employ authentic sources in ESP instruction	1	11.11	5	55.56	3	33.33	0	0	0	0	3.78
26. It is troublesome to access authentic materials	0	0	5	55.56	1	11.11	3	33.33	0	0	3.22
27. It is difficult to select suitable authentic materials	3	33.33	5	55.56	1	11.11	0	0	0	0	4.22
28. It is difficult to design suitable tasks when teachers use authentic materials	1	11.11	5	55.56	1	11.11	2	22.22	0	0	3.56
29. Using authentic materials is time- consuming	1	11.11	4	44.45	2	22.22	2	22.22	0	0	3.44
30. Like to use authentic sources rather than textbooks in my ESP courses	0	0	2	22.22	4	44.45	3	33.33	0	0	2.89

31. Like to use authentic sources as supplementary materials in my ESP courses	0	0	7	77.78	2	22.22	0	0	0	0	3.78
32. Thanks to authentic materials, teachers can introduce learners to different dialects better than they can with designed materials	0	0	5	55.56	2	22.22	2	22.22	0	0	3.33
33. Thanks to authentic materials, teachers can incorporate subjects related to learners' social and working life better than they can with designed material	0	0	5	55.56	3	33.33	1	11.11	0	0	3.44
SUB GRAND MEAN	3.37										

Table 2: Summarizing teachers' opinions on using authentic sources

Findings of interview

After reading and analysing all responses, the researcher arranged answers of the participants in two main sections, namely: 1) Teachers' perceptions toward authentic materials in English teaching, 2) The use of authentic materials in ESP teaching. Especially, the latter section included three sub-themes such as advantages of using authentic materials in ESP teaching, challenges in using authentic materials in ESP teaching and teachers' recommendations toward the use of authentic materials in ESP classes.

Firstly, the researchers found that all ESP teachers had a clear perception of authentic materials, as presented by participant 1: *"As for me, authentic materials are all things which can be found in daily life. Unlike textbooks, they do not require the management of Education Ministry in the teaching process."*

Secondly, the overall response to the survey indicated the necessity of using authentic materials in the ESP classes, thanks to their great credits. Although there were a considerable number of advantages listed in responses, three highlights could be presented as follows: (1) Helping learners access language in real situations. Teacher 3 explained: *"Learners have chances to experience the most authentic language in reality."* As explained by teacher 4: *"We cannot deny strong points of authentic materials because the closeness to language outside the classroom can lead to an improvement of language skills, particularly listening and speaking."* (2) Boosting learners' working competence. In the teacher 5's statement, she said: *"The deficiency of opportunities to enjoy real contexts by reason of strict provisions may be partly solved by introducing students to authentic materials. As a result, they can get acquainted with styles, presentation,*

methods, forms which they can encounter in the future job." As asserted by teacher 9: *"They help me connect the practical world to my students. Learners will feel ready right after graduation as they are equipped with basic skills and knowledge like observation, analysis and synthesis. For example, watching videos of crime scene investigation may make them develop their critical thinking and judgement."* (3) Stimulating learners' interests. Teacher 1 answered: *"My students are keen on and enthusiastic about experiencing authentic sources"*. Similarly, teacher 9 told the researcher about her students: *"The attitude of students seems to be different from the past lessons after accessing to authentic materials. They are willing to ask and answer about the content of the lesson which is introduced via concrete realia"*. (4) Instructors have various selections for ESP classes because of the diversity of forms, types and themes of authentic materials. In teacher 2's explanation, he said: *"It is not too difficult to find any topics presented in authentic sources from the basic daily issues to professional knowledge of politics, security issues, etc."* Similarly, teacher 8 implied that: *"Previously designed materials contain some fixed topics, which make teachers struggle with extending the contents. Meanwhile, thanks to the development of the Internet, it is easy to find most of issues of students' and teachers' concerns."*

Thirdly, the interview helped the investigator detect two main problems teachers often face when using authentic materials in ESP classes. (1) Accessing these sources is quite difficult. A possible explanation for these results may be the limitation of approaching materials with high confidentiality. Teacher 8 asserted: *"I do not underestimate the coverage of information of the Internet. However, some secret knowledge cannot be found. Even some professional words relating to security work have no equal uses in written materials in English. Accordingly, translation and interpretation is a challenge."* (2) Preparing authentic materials is time-consuming. The argument was supported by teacher 3: *"It requires arduous effort to ensure the time for each lesson when I use these sources. Too many activities and issues need to be managed"*. Teacher 6 stated: *"I have to spend much time on selecting, adapting the suitable materials to make them more comprehensible to learners."*

Fourthly, the results of interview showed that all of participants gave some positive statements toward the recommendation of authentic materials use in ESP teaching. Teacher 3 said: *"We cannot only use textbook. The teachers should have wide thought about the materials that they use for their teaching materials. However, we should combine textbooks and authentic materials instead of using the only source to maximize their merits and supplement their demerits."*

Discussion 1: Teachers' perceptions of advantages of authentic materials

This study set out with the aim of assessing the importance of authentic materials in ESP teaching. The merged findings accord with the earlier observations, which showed their close relationship. The majority of participants found it interesting. Moreover, they asserted that such materials familiarise students with the language used by the natives and have cognizance of its essence. The similarity was found in the argument of Richard (2004) and Tomlinson (2012).

Another important finding was the possibility of motivating students. There were several possible explanations for this result. Textbooks were often presented and compiled in a dull and repeated way. In contrast, non-purposeful teaching materials exist in various forms and types that can meet different requirements of teachers in ESP teaching. The findings match those observed in the study by Gilmore (2007).

One anticipated finding was also revealed that authentic sources could meet demands in the future job for learners. It seems possible that students could study writing styles, listening and reading comprehension skills and vocabularies in parallel with practical skills. This was in line with the conclusion of Al-Musallam (2009) that participants concurred with the effectiveness of authentic materials in the working environment.

Moreover, most respondents explained that because of authentic input's different kinds and themes, ESP lecturers could give the best suitable choice for each period. This matched with Wahyuningtyas' (2019) findings which indicated that nearly almost topics intertwined in authentic materials could be compatible with learners' needs and interests.

Contrary to expectations, this study did not find the absolute support for authentic materials compared with traditional books. They suggested using authentic materials as a supplementary source. The combination would create optimal results. The suggestion observed in this investigation were far below those observed by Zhafarghandi et al. (2014), who lean towards designed materials.

More surprisingly, the high proportion of participants responded that comprehension of students was not hampered by cultural elements in authentic sources. Instead, students thought that they could overcome culture-relating challenges in language acquisition. This also accords with the work of Beresova (2015), who emphasized authentic texts in newspapers will enrich cultural understanding.

Discussion 2: Teachers' perceptions of disadvantages of authentic materials

The outcomes drawn from both questionnaires and interviews pointed out that time-consuming was a considerable

difficulty ESP teachers were burdened with in their classes. It could be attributed to the process of designing activities and tasks based on such materials that required elaborative preparation. Additionally, a series of stages for preparation, including selection, adaptation, question and task designing, expect more consideration, which may lead to time pressure. These results supported the previous research (Silvani, 2018) in this area. The next problem found in the study was that instructors were stuck in the limitation of exposure to certain authentic sources except for open sources. This did not accord with Case (2012), who believed in the availability and diversity of unceasingly updated types of authentic sources.

Conclusion

A paucity of previous research on authentic materials in ESP courses in the Public Security universities is seen as a primary motivation for the present study. It was designed on the basis of referring to the framework of Al-Musallam (2009) and Silvani (2018) and the combination of two types of collecting design to determine the ESP lecturers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of the practical use of non-purposefully teaching materials at the PSA. The project made a minor difference compared with the previous research. It highlighted the importance of introducing this type of material to ESP students thanks to their impressive benefits to both instructors and

learners. The generalizability of these results is subject to certain limitations due to its small sample of participants. Nevertheless, it is still a trustworthy source for reference and a fruitful area for further work to cultivate more understanding in the related theory and the practical use in didactic programs in the coming time.

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